

Letter n°1116 of Tuesday 17th June 2025

The Schengen Agreements turn 40

Catherine Wihtol de Wenden - 17 Jun 2025

On the 40th anniversary of the Schengen Agreement, signed on 14 June 1985 by five founding states, it is worth looking back at the history and transformations of this crucial pillar of European integration. Designed to guarantee freedom of movement within the Union, the Schengen system is increasingly marked by tighter controls at external borders. This dynamic, which fluctuates between free movement and security restrictions, reflects the challenges facing a Europe seeking a balance between solidarity and sovereignty.



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The 'Schuman Report on Europe, the State of the Union' 2025 is now available on the Robert Schuman Foundation website and in bookshops. This 19th publication brings together the most relevant contributions to answer today's key questions and gives a voice to those who shape and analyse Europe. Featuring original maps and statistical data with commentary, the Schuman Report on Europe, the State of the Union 2025, published by Hémisphères, is an indispensable tool for understanding the multidimensional challenges facing contemporary Europe. Order your copy now! [Read more](#)

■ Commission :



Nuclear programme for 2050

On 13 June, the European Commission unveiled the 8th Nuclear Investment Programme (PINIC), which aims to assess investment needs in this sector until 2050. This framework supports decarbonisation and strengthens the European Union's energy competitiveness. It proposes scenarios based on different levels of nuclear deployment, assessing their impact on CO₂ emissions and costs. The aim is to guide Member States and investors towards coherent strategies, securing the ecological transition and European energy stability. [Read more](#)



Update of the list of countries at risk of financial crime

On 10 June, the European Commission updated the list of high-risk countries and territories with strategic weaknesses in their national anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing regimes. Among the countries added to the list is Monaco, while Gibraltar has been removed. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Council :



Meeting of Ministers of the Interior and Justice

On 12 and 13 June, the Ministers of Justice and the Interior meeting in Luxembourg adopted the priorities in the fight against serious organised crime for the next four years (2026-2029). They reached agreement on a draft regulation that will guarantee the rights of adults in need of protection or support in cross-border situations, and agreed to extend temporary protection for refugees from Ukraine. They also commemorated the 40th anniversary of Schengen. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



New customs duties on Russian and Belarusian agricultural products and fertilisers

On 12 June, the Council adopted a regulation imposing new customs duties on agricultural products and certain fertilisers from Russia and Belarus that were not yet subject to such customs duties. The aim is to make the European Union less dependent on these imports and to reduce Russia's export revenues, thereby limiting its ability to finance its war of aggression against Ukraine. The increases in customs duties on fertilisers will be introduced gradually over a transitional period of three years. [Read more](#)

■ Diplomacy :



Conclusion of a comprehensive package of agreements between the European Union and Switzerland

On 13 June, the European Commission proposed that the Council authorise the signing and conclusion of a comprehensive package of agreements with Switzerland, marking a step towards a modernised partnership. The package includes the updating of five agreements on free movement, transport, agriculture, conformity assessment and trade in agricultural products, with a view to bringing them into line with EU law and ensuring fair competition. New agreements extend cooperation in areas such as food safety, health, electricity and space. The European Union and Switzerland will now proceed with the ratification of these agreements. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Parliament :



European Youth Event (EYE)

On 13 and 14 June, Strasbourg became the beating heart of Europe's young people during EYE2025, bringing together 9,000 young people from nearly 160 countries. More than 450 activities took place in the European Parliament and in the EYE Village, including debates, workshops and artistic performances. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ European Agencies :



Decrease in irregular crossings according to Frontex

According to a statement by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, Frontex, the number of irregular migrant arrivals in the European Union fell by 20% in the first five months of 2025. The largest decreases in irregular crossings were recorded on the Western Balkan route (-56%), the West African route (-35%) and the Eastern Mediterranean route (-30%). There was also a 7% decrease in migrant crossings from Belarus to Poland and the Baltic countries. In its latest report, Frontex reported a 30% decrease in irregular crossings between 2023 and 2024. [Read more](#)



334th European Space Agency Council

The European Space Agency wants to increase its 'autonomy' in the face of uncertainties arising from budget cuts planned by the Trump administration, which would affect several programmes developed in collaboration with NASA, its Director General Josef Aschbacher said on 12 June at the end of the agency's 334th Council meeting. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Germany :



OECD Economic Survey of Germany

According to the OECD Economic Survey of 12 June, the German economy has shown resilience, but reforms are needed to unleash business momentum and investment. Priorities include reducing administrative burdens on businesses, easing access to regulated professions, improving the reception of skilled immigrants, modernising public administration and encouraging women, older people and low-income workers to participate in the labour market. According to the study, Germany's GDP is expected to grow by 0.4% in 2025 and 1.2% in 2026, with inflation averaging 2.4% in 2025 and 2.1% in 2026. [Read more](#)

■ Denmark :



Emmanuel Macron visits Greenland

French President Emmanuel Macron visited Greenland on 15 June, alongside Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen, at the invitation of Greenlandic Prime Minister Jens-Frederik Nielsen. The visit comes amid heightened geopolitical tensions after US President Donald Trump raised the possibility of acquiring the island. Emmanuel Macron is the first European head of state to visit since these statements and intends to assert European sovereignty by presenting a united European front. Discussions focused on security in the North Atlantic and the Arctic, energy cooperation, economic development and the fight against climate change. Denmark welcomed this initiative as a sign of support for its autonomy vis-à-vis Washington. [Read more - Other link](#)

■ Spain :



Visit to Romania

King Felipe VI and Spanish Minister of Defence Margarita Robles visited the Cincu military camp in Romania, where they met with Romanian President Nicusor Dan on 10 June. The visit gave the minister an opportunity to speak about the presence of Spanish troops in Romania as proof of the country's commitment to collective defence. She also emphasised NATO's unity in Europe. [Read more](#)

■ France :



55th International Paris Air Show

The International Paris Air Show (SIAE) is being held until 22 June at Le Bourget. This 55th year features over 2,500 exhibitors from 48 countries, 70 hectares of exhibition space with 150 aircraft and 210 flight demonstrations. This show heralds a global crossroads for the aerospace industry, offering networking opportunities, technological innovations and spectacular demonstrations. It also emphasises social and environmental responsibility, with initiatives in sustainable development and carbon footprint reduction. [Read more](#)

■ The Netherlands :



New parliamentary elections on 29 October

The Council of Ministers has approved the holding of early parliamentary elections on 29 October, following the withdrawal of Geert Wilders' Party for Freedom and Progress (PVV) from the four-party coalition government. As a result, Prime Minister Dick Schoof's government has collapsed. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Poland :



Confidence vote in the Polish Parliament

On 11 June, Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk won a vote of confidence in Parliament by 243 votes to 210. In his speech, he defended his government's mandate in the face of national challenges, particularly immigration and security. He highlighted the actions taken by the Council of Ministers in the areas of border protection, cybersecurity and migration policy. This vote confirms his government's legitimacy at a time of growing tensions. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ UK :



Agreement on free movement with Gibraltar

Nine years after the Brexit referendum, British Foreign Secretary David Lammy, his Spanish counterpart José Manuel Albares, and European Commissioner for Trade and Economic Security Maroš Šefčovič signed a historic agreement in Brussels on 11 June regulating the free movement of goods and people in Gibraltar. This agreement marks the final stage of post-Brexit negotiations and allows Gibraltar citizens to once again enjoy freedom of movement with Spain and the rest of the European Union. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Bosnia-Herzegovina :



Cooperation agreement with the European agency Frontex

On 11 June, the European Union and Bosnia and Herzegovina signed an agreement in Brussels to strengthen border security, including the deployment of European border guards. This agreement aims to combat illegal immigration and cross-border crime, particularly on the Balkan route. It is part of a broader effort to support the countries of the Western Balkans, where the European Union is investing heavily to improve migration management and align standards with Schengen. [Read more](#)

■ Moldova :



Report on the fight against human trafficking in Moldova

On 10 June, the Council of Europe's Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) released its fourth report on Moldova covering the period 2020-2025. Significant progress has been observed, particularly in terms of legislative measures and public policies such as the establishment of a National Action Plan targeting the groups most vulnerable to exploitation. The report calls for additional measures, particularly to protect children, improve assistance to victims and strengthen the effectiveness of investigations. [Read more](#)

■ Ukraine :



Ukraine strengthens its European alliances

On 11 June, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky hosted the South-East Europe Summit in Odessa. Together, they launched a regional coordination platform to address security, humanitarian and energy threats in South-East Europe, particularly in the Black Sea region. On the 12th, he received German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius, who announced a new €500 million military aid package, including ammunition, air defence systems and armoured vehicles. These initiatives illustrate Kyiv's resolve to strengthen its resilience through increased cooperation with its European neighbours and allies. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)

■ Council of Europe :



Alain Berset restates support for Armenia

During a visit to Yerevan on 13 June, Alain Berset, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, praised Armenia's commitment to democracy and called for lasting peace with Azerbaijan. He highlighted the Organisation's support for the country's reform process, in particular through the 2023-2026 Action Plan. He announced €2.8 million in aid for refugees from Karabakh. He encouraged Armenia to join new European conventions and stressed the importance of young people in defending democratic values. [Read more](#)

■ UN :



Third United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3) in Nice

From 9 to 13 June, the city of Nice hosted the third United Nations Ocean Conference, co-organised by France and Costa Rica. The conference resulted in the adoption of an Action Plan aimed at accelerating concrete commitments for the preservation of the oceans. [Read more](#)

■ Studies/Reports :



Implementation of the European Pact on Migration and Asylum: mid-term review

One year after the adoption of the Pact on Migration and Asylum, the European Commission has presented an encouraging review but stresses that further efforts are needed. Significant progress has been made in areas such as the Eurodac database, border procedures and reception conditions. However, challenges remain, particularly with regard to returns, the identification of reception facilities and coordination between Member States. Full implementation of the pact is scheduled for mid-2026. [Read more](#)



Forest fires: the effectiveness of European funds called into question

Despite increased European Union funding to prevent forest fires, their impact remains difficult to assess, according to a report by the European Court of Auditors published on 11 June. The auditors highlight that spending is often poorly targeted, based on obsolescent data and lacking a sustainable vision. Although encouraging efforts have been noted, particularly in Portugal and Spain, the frequency and intensity of fires continue to increase. Without rigorous monitoring and a long-term strategy, European aid is likely to remain a 'flash in the pan'. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



European aid to Ukraine

According to a study by the Kiel Institute published on 16 June, increased aid from European countries to Ukraine in early 2025 helped fill the gap left by the withdrawal of Donald Trump's new US administration, with Ukraine receiving more aid between January and April 2025 than the average for the same period in previous years. [Read more](#)



ARTE, European broadcasting platform

On 11 June, French Minister of Culture Rachida Dati welcomed her European counterparts and representatives from the cultural sector to Paris. The meeting was marked by a discussion between Rachida Dati and her German counterpart, Wolfram Weimer. Both expressed their desire for the Franco-German partnership to drive the transformation of ARTE into a European broadcasting platform capable of combating disinformation, particularly in the face of Russian and Chinese influence, and of strengthening democratic resilience. This meeting follows on from the European Council of Culture Ministers on 13 May in Brussels and the forum signed in Cannes by 25 Member States in favour of the European cultural model. [Read more](#) - [Other link](#)



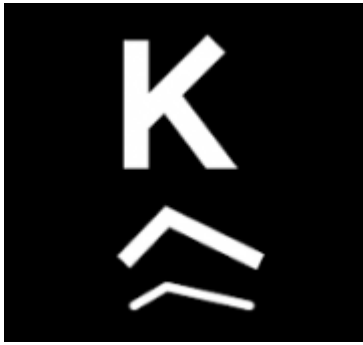
150th birthday of Thomas Mann

The year 2025 marks the 150th birthday of Thomas Mann, a major figure in 20th-century German literature. The event 'Mann 2025: 150 years of Thomas Mann' pays tribute to this iconic writer through a series of international events, including readings, exhibitions and conferences exploring his literary and political legacy. A website provides a calendar of events around the world until January 2026. [Read more](#)



Wolfgang Tillmans in Paris

Until 22 September, the Centre Pompidou is hosting an exhibition by Wolfgang Tillmans. The artist has taken over the Bibliothèque publique d'information with an installation combining photography, video, music and text, interacting with the architecture of the space and questioning its role as a place of knowledge. Through 35 years of work, he addresses topics such as social change, contemporary culture and the transmission of knowledge. His work invites us to reflect on our times and the means of disseminating information. [Read more](#)



Bonnard in Lillehammer

The Lillehammer Kunstmuseum is presenting 'Bonnard and the Nordic Countries' until 19 October, an exhibition dedicated to Pierre Bonnard (1867-1947), master of 20th-century colourism. The exhibition highlights Bonnard's influence on Nordic artists, emphasising the aesthetic dialogue between France and Scandinavia since the 1920s. It explores more than a hundred works by Bonnard as well as Nordic pieces inspired by his legacy. [Read more](#)



Surrealism and Romanticism in Hamburg

The Hamburger Kunsthalle is hosting the exhibition 'Rendezvous der Träume' until 12 October, featuring more than fifty surrealist artists. This exhibition explores the similar symbols and visions of the Romantics and Surrealists, revealing how Romanticism fuelled the imaginative power of Surrealism. [Read more](#)



Young artists in Athens

The DESTE Foundation and the New Museum, in partnership with the Benaki Museum, are presenting 'In a Bright Green Field', a group exhibition featuring 29 young Greek and Cypriot artists, until 13 September. Through painting, sculpture, film and performance, these artists explore possible futures where new relationships with nature and expanded forms of community could emerge. Inspired by local histories in Greece and Cyprus, they address themes such as changing work, technology, and rural and urban life. The exhibition highlights a dynamic art scene that is attentive to contemporary global challenges. [Read more](#)



Sam Gilliam in Dublin

The Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA) is presenting a solo exhibition of Sam Gilliam's work until 25 January 2026. Since the mid-1960s, Sam Gilliam has established himself as a pioneer with his famous draped paintings, which merge painting, sculpture and performance in dialogue with the architecture of the exhibition spaces. The undulating, theatrical forms of his works evoke the wild grandeur of the Irish coastline, with fluid compositions that capture the organic and unpredictable nature of the land and sea. [Read more](#)



Contemporary art in Rennes

The exhibition 'Les Yeux dans les yeux' (Eyes in the Eyes), on display at the Couvent des Jacobins in Rennes until 14 September, explores the theme of portraiture through more than 90 works from the Pinault Collection. These works, both pictorial and photographic, confront visitors with faces that reflect history, emotions and human tensions. The event showcases many contemporary artists. [Read more](#)



Ljubljana Festival

The Slovenian capital is hosting the 73rd Ljubljana Festival until 12 September. The programme brings together nationally and internationally renowned artists with operas, ballets, musicals, symphony concerts, chamber music, jazz and theatre. The performances are held in various iconic venues around the city. [Read more](#)



Grenada Festival

The Granada Music and Dance Festival conveys the link between the imaginary city and the real city described by artists, between Andalusian folk tradition and the important European musical heritage that resonates there. The 2025 edition of the festival runs until 13 July and brings together artists from different worlds, ranging from singing to dance and cinema. [Read more](#)



"Resistance" in Edinburgh

Until 4 January 2026, the Modern Two museum in Edinburgh is hosting the exhibition 'Resistance' conceived by British artist and filmmaker Steve Rodney McQueen. It traces a hundred years of protest movements in the United Kingdom, highlighting the decisive role of photography in documenting, transmitting and mobilising social struggles. Through the works of major photographers, 'Resistance' highlights stories that have long remained in the shadows, stories that have transformed British society through courage and solidarity. [Read more](#)

■ Agenda :



16 & 17 June

G7 Summit (Canada)



16-19 June 2025

Plenary Session of the European Parliament (Strasbourg)



17 June 2025

Foreign Affairs Council (video conference) Environment Council (Luxembourg)



19 June 2025

Eurogroup



19 & 20 June 2025

Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (Luxembourg)



20 June 2025

"Economic and Financial Affairs" Council



23 & 24 June 2025

"Agriculture and Fisheries" Council (Luxembourg)



23 & 24 June 2025

"Agriculture and Fisheries" Council (Luxembourg)



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